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## Brief report

# “It’s on Time That They Assimilate” – Differential acculturation expectations towards first and second generation immigrants

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## ABSTRACT

Research has shown that societal majority members have specific conceptions (i.e., acculturation expectations) about how immigrants should acculturate. These expectations are often less welcoming towards devalued than valued immigrant groups. In a  $2 \times 2$  experiment with a sample of 187 German majority members we show that acculturation expectations also differ in terms of which generation members of the targeted immigrant groups belong to. Our results revealed lower endorsement of integrationism towards the second generation of both valued and devalued immigrants. However, the results indicated that acculturation expectations were particularly unwelcoming towards the second generation of devalued immigrant groups. For valued immigrants, segregationism was lower towards the second generation than towards the first generation. For devalued immigrants in contrast, assimilationism was higher towards the second generation compared to the first generation. Majority members' tendency to be less willing to endorse cultural maintenance for second generations stands in stark contrast to immigrants' preference of cultural maintenance and may therefore lead to particularly conflictual societal outcomes. Implications of the findings for future studies are discussed.

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*“Nobody in Germany calls for assimilation” – Angela Merkel in Turkish newspaper**‘Hürriyet’ (24.3.10)*

Spurred by the theoretical framework of John Berry, an enormous body of research has focused on the acculturation of immigrants (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012). In more recent years, particularly over the last decade (see e.g., Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997; Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998), more attention has been paid on the acculturation expectations of ethnic majority members, which also were explicitly discussed in Berry's model already in 1974 (Berry, 1974). In contrast to acculturation strategies which deal with the various ways in which immigrants relate to the dominant culture (i.e., the culture of their society of residence) and their heritage culture (Berry, 1997), acculturation expectations refer to majority members' expectations about how immigrants should acculturate (Bourhis et al., 1997). Following recent modifications (Bourhis & Montreuil, 2013) of the interactional acculturation framework of Bourhis et al. (1997), majority members may hold one of six different acculturation expectations, “three welcoming orientations which are individualism, integrationism and transformation-integrationism; and three rejecting orientations, namely: assimilationism, segregationism and exclusionism” (Bourhis & Montreuil, 2013, p. 3)

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Majority members endorsing *integrationism* encourage immigrants to maintain both substantial parts of their heritage culture and to adopt central aspects of the dominant culture. *Transformation-integrationism* is similar to integrationism, except that, here, the responsibility of the host society to actively accommodate and integrate immigrants is emphasized. Those endorsing *individualism*, in contrast, pay less attention to culture in general – both to their own culture and immigrants' heritage culture – following the rationale that everybody, whether immigrant or not, should be judged individually according to his or her personal qualities and characteristics. In cross-cultural research, these three 'welcoming' acculturation expectations have shown to be positively related to interethnic contact measures and favorable perceptions of immigrant groups, and to be negatively related to prejudice predicting constructs such as social dominance orientation (see Bourhis & Montreuil, 2013 for a review).

In contrast, majority members preferring assimilationism, segregationism or exclusionism as acculturation expectations, take a more negative or 'unwelcoming' stance towards immigration and immigrants' heritage culture. *Assimilationists* expect immigrants to give up, and thereby "replace", their heritage culture with the dominant culture. *Segregationists* in contrast do not want immigrants to get involved with the dominant culture at all, but to "stick to themselves". Last and maybe most dramatically, *exclusionists* reject any type of immigration and see immigrants as destroying or adulterating the dominant culture. In its most extreme form, this ideological stance involves the support of deportation of immigrants (Bourhis et al., 1997).

Majority members across various countries mostly hold welcoming acculturation expectations towards immigrants, with integrationism being the most endorsed (see, e.g., Abu-Rayya & White, 2010; Barrette, Bourhis, Personnaz, & Personnaz, 2004; Bourhis, Barrette, El-Geledi, & Schmidt, 2009; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk, & Schmitz, 2003; Pfafferott & Brown, 2006). Some comparative studies, however, indicate that Germany is one of few European countries with particularly strong expectations of immigrants to assimilate or separate (see Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, & Petzel, 2001 for a review). Nevertheless, newer studies re-confirm the notion that also in Germany, integrationism seems to be the most favored expectation (Piontkowski, Rohmann, & Florack, 2002; Rohmann, Florack, & Piontkowski, 2006).

A growing number of studies have witnessed an important distinction in the acculturation expectations (e.g., Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Safdar, Dupuis, Lewis, El-Geledi, & Bourhis, 2008). Specifically, acculturation expectations appear to vary depending on the immigration group concerned. While expectations seem to be more welcoming towards valued minorities, endorsement of less welcoming expectations is more common for devalued minorities.

## 1. The present study: introducing the generational distinction

Research on social attitudes towards immigrant groups most often differentiates between immigrant groups on the basis of ethnicity, while paying little attention to distinctions such as generational status (Matera, Stefanile, & Brown, 2011). This is surprising, given the growing number of Europe's population with immigrant background that was born in the country their parents immigrated to. For instance, of the 15 million German citizens with an immigrant background, about one third was born in Germany, and thereby belongs to the second generation of immigrants (destatis, 2011). There are reasons to believe that acculturation expectations should vary toward first and second generations:

- Generally, majority members may expect a higher national involvement from co-citizens with an immigration background who are born in their country of residence than from those who were born abroad. Given that they feel that these expectations are not fulfilled, they may show acculturation expectations that place a stronger emphasis on host culture adaptation than cultural maintenance.
- Cross-cultural research has shown that second generation immigrants perceive stronger societal assimilation pressure than their peers born abroad (Kunst & Sam, 2013). One possible explanation for this finding may be that majority members are more tolerant and patient towards the cultural maintenance of first generation immigrants who are seen as still orienting themselves in the new cultural sphere, whereas this tolerance and patience may be exhausted for the second generation.
- Similarly, acculturation expectations may be more tolerant towards first generations of immigrants than towards second generations of immigrants, because it is still unsure whether they intend to stay in their country of residence for good. This makes sense in a context such as Germany, where many immigrants arrived as guest-workers who were supposed to leave the country after a certain time, but ultimately settled in Germany for good.

Against this background, this present study set out to compare acculturation expectations towards first and second generations of immigrants in a sample of German majority members. Here we test different hypotheses: First, based on the findings of earlier studies (e.g., Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Safdar et al., 2008), we expect acculturation expectations to be less welcoming towards devalued minority members, in this case German-Turks (*Hypothesis 1*). Second, based on the study by Kunst and Sam (2013), we expect acculturation expectations to be less welcoming towards second than first generation immigrants in Germany (*Hypothesis 2*). Last, given that out-group status moderates the acculturation expectation of majority members (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Safdar et al., 2008) as we expect in the first hypothesis, we assume that this tendency may be especially marked for devalued immigrants (*Hypothesis 3*). Hence, particularly with devalued immigrants as out-group, expectations may be less welcoming towards the second generation of immigrants.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

The study sample comprised 187 German majority members. The average age in years was 29.86 ( $SD = 7.65$ ) and the majority were male (68.6%). Of the participants, 6.4% reported primary or lower secondary education, 26.1% middle school, 34.6% higher secondary school, 16.0% a bachelor degree and 16.5% a master degree as their highest accomplished education. Hence, the sample was education-wise relatively diverse.

### 2.2. Procedure

Participants were recruited using an online panel and online social networks. Before participating, each individual was informed that the study dealt with “social attitudes in multicultural societies”, that participation was voluntary and about their right to withdraw from participation at any given time. They were also assured of the anonymous nature of the study, and the confidentiality of their responses.

At the beginning of the study, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In both conditions, respondents were asked to rate their endorsement of the different acculturation expectations towards first and towards second generation immigrants belonging to one of two ethnic groups. In the first condition, the immigrant group to be rated was Turks, which constitute a devalued minority that experiences high level of religious prejudice in Germany (Kunst, Sam, & Ulleberg, 2012; Kunst, Tajamal, Sam, & Ulleberg, 2012). Poles were the target out-group to be rated in the second condition, which constitute a valued or at least neutral status immigrant group (Piontkowski et al., 2002). The display order of the first and second generation measures was randomized, such that about half of the participants first answered the first generation measure followed by the second generation measure. This order was reversed for the other half of the participants in order to prevent interaction effects. After answering the acculturation expectation measures, individuals were asked to evaluate the respective immigrant group on different traits. This was expected to give information about the validity of the valued-devalued distinction applied. The intra-scale presentation order of the items was randomized for each measure to prevent order effects.

### 2.3. Instruments

#### 2.3.1. Out-group evaluations

A measure developed by Stephan and Stephan (1996) was used to measure participants' evaluation of the respective out-group (also see Stephan, Ybarra, Martínez, Schwarzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). Individuals had to first indicate the percentage of all Turks/Poles in Germany they believed to hold nine different traits (i.e., hard-working, ignorant, friendly, aggressive, reliable, undisciplined, dishonest, respectful and unintelligent) on a continuous scale ranging from zero to hundred percent. In addition, they had to rate how favorable they found it for people in general to have the different traits, ranging from 1 (*very bad*) to 6 (*very good*). This gave semantic information about whether the respective traits were regarded as negative or positive. Finally, indices for each trait evaluation were computed by multiplying the percentage estimate with the trait evaluation. This resulted in scales with a possible range of 0–600. Factor analyses of the index items gave support of a two factor scale with the positive items loading on the first factor and the negative items on the second factor. Consequently, separate mean scales were computed representing positive ( $\alpha = .92$ ) or negative out-group evaluation ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

#### 2.3.2. Acculturation expectations

A recent version of the Host Community Acculturation Scale (Bourhis & Montreuil, 2013) was adopted to measure participants' acculturation expectations. Each two items measured the expectations assimilationism (e.g., “[Polish/Turkish] immigrants born in [Germany/heritage country] should give up their culture of origin in favor of the German culture”), segregationism (e.g., “[Polish/Turkish] immigrants born in [Germany/heritage country] can maintain their culture of origin as long as it has no influence on the German culture”), exclusionism (e.g., “The culture of [Polish/Turkish] immigrants born in [Germany/heritage country] has no value for Germany”), individualism (e.g., “Whether [Polish/Turkish] immigrants born in [Germany/heritage country] maintain their cultural heritage or adopt the German culture makes no difference because each person is free to adopt the culture of his/her choice”), transformation-integrationism (e.g., “Germans should transform certain aspects of their own culture in order to really integrate the culture of [Polish/Turkish] immigrants born in [Germany/heritage country]”) and integrationism (e.g., “[Polish/Turkish] immigrants born in [Germany/heritage country] should maintain their own heritage culture while also adopting the German culture”). Each strategy was measured twice, one time towards first and a second time toward second generation immigrants. Responses were rated on 6-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*). The reliability of the six resulting 2-item scales was satisfactory, ranging from .90 to .95 (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
Correlations and reliability coefficients for the main study variables.

Acculturation expectation	$\alpha^1$	$\alpha^2$	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Assimilationist	.91	.91		-.17*	.74***	-.64***	-.37***	-.44***
2. Segregationist	.90	.90			-.05	.18*	.05	.43***
3. Exclusionist	.95	.93				-.64***	-.49**	-.43***
4. Individualist	.94	.95					.44***	.57***
5. Trans.-integrationist	.91	.93						.31***
6. Integrationist	.94	.92						

Note:  $\alpha^1$  = reliability coefficient of expectation measure towards 1st generation and  $\alpha^2$  = 2nd generation.

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Preliminary analyses

The valued-devalued dichotomy applied in our study obtained support. Comparing the mean of the positive evaluation scale, participants evaluated Poles more positively ( $M = 324.77$ ,  $SD = 143.97$ ) than they evaluated Turks ( $M = 239.43$ ,  $SD = 156.93$ ;  $t(186) = -3.88$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ ). Analogously, on the negative evaluation scale Turks were more negatively evaluated ( $M = 88.57$ ,  $SD = 70.70$ ) than Poles ( $M = 54.29$ ,  $SD = 45.88$ ;  $t(186) = 3.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ ).

**Hypothesis 1.** Differences between acculturation expectations for valued and devalued immigrants.

A repeated measures 2 (acculturation expectations: first vs. second generation)  $\times$  2 (out-group status: valued vs. devalued) MANOVA with acculturation expectations entered as within-subject factor and out-group status (devalued, valued) as a between-subjects factor was conducted. The effect of out-group status was significant,  $F(6, 181) = 3.54$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .11$ , and significant differences were found for several acculturation expectations (see Fig. 1 for all expectations). To start with, pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni correction showed that participants expressed a significantly higher degree of assimilationism towards devalued immigrants ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SE = .15$ ), than valued immigrants ( $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = .16$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Secondly, they showed higher degrees of exclusionism towards devalued ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SE = .17$ ), than valued immigrants ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SE = .18$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Thirdly, individualism was endorsed to higher degrees for valued ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SE = .17$ ) than devalued immigrants ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SE = .17$ ;  $p < .05$ ). A marginally significant difference ( $p = .084$ ) was observed for transformation integrationism, with the mean being slightly higher for valued ( $M = 2.33$ ,  $SE = .14$ ), than devalued immigrants ( $M = 1.99$ ,  $SE = .14$ ). Summing up, the first hypothesis obtained support, as acculturation expectations were less welcoming toward devalued immigrants, than toward valued immigrants.

**Hypotheses 2 and 3.** Acculturation expectations towards first and second generation immigrants.

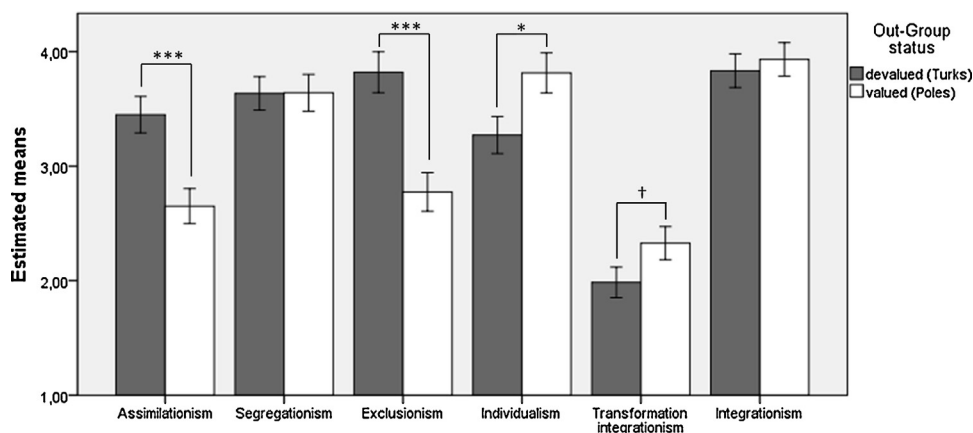


Fig. 1. Acculturation expectations toward valued and devalued minorities. †  $p < .09$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The repeated measures MANOVA indicated a significant difference for generation across the expectation measures ( $F(6, 181) = 2.18, p < .05, \eta^2 = .06$ ), while the univariate tests revealed significant differences specifically for integrationism ( $F(1, 186) = 5.18, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$ ) and segregationism ( $F(1, 186) = 8.00, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04$ ). Regardless of out-group status, respondents displayed a higher preference of integrationism ( $M = 3.98$ ) and segregationism ( $M = 3.74$ ) towards first generation immigrants compared to second generation immigrants (integrationism:  $M = 3.79$ ; segregationism:  $M = 3.53$ ; see Fig. 2). This gave some support for our second hypothesis.

An inspection of the marginally significant interaction-term (i.e., generation  $\times$  out-group status), however, indicated that the segregationism difference was moderated by out-group status ( $F(1, 186) = 3.03, p = .084, \eta^2 = .02$ ). In fact, consistent with Hypothesis 3, contrasts revealed that segregationism towards valued immigrants was significantly lower for second generation immigrants ( $M = 3.47$ ) than first generation immigrants ( $M = 3.81$ ;  $t(90) = 2.94, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05$ ; see Fig. 3), while no such difference was observed in regard of devalued immigrants ( $t(96) = .85, p = .397$ ).

Furthermore, the univariate results indicated a significant interaction for assimilationism ( $F(1, 186) = 4.84, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$ ). As displayed in Fig. 4, and with respect to devalued immigrants, participants endorsed assimilationism to higher degrees towards second generation immigrants ( $M = 3.57$ ) than first generation immigrants ( $M = 3.32$ ;  $t(96) = -2.84, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04$ ), whereas no such difference was observed for valued immigrants ( $t(90) = .55, p = .587$ ).

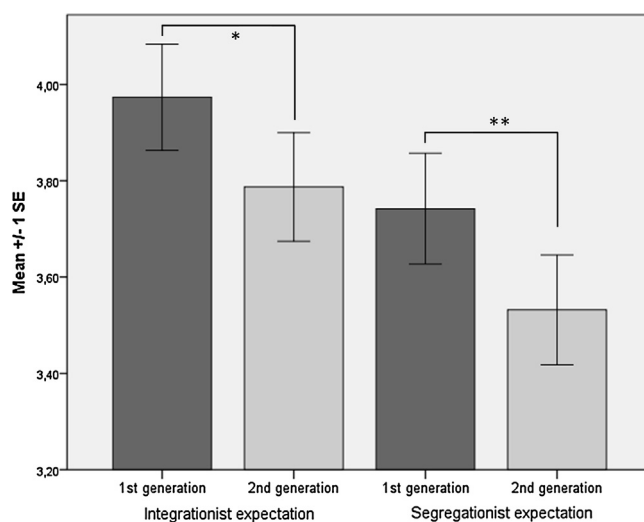


Fig. 2. Integrationist and segregationist expectation towards first and second generation immigrants. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

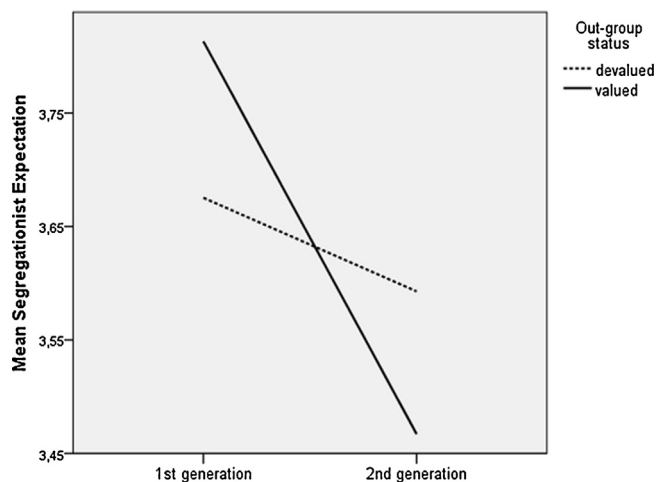


Fig. 3. Interaction of out-group and generational status for segregationist expectation.

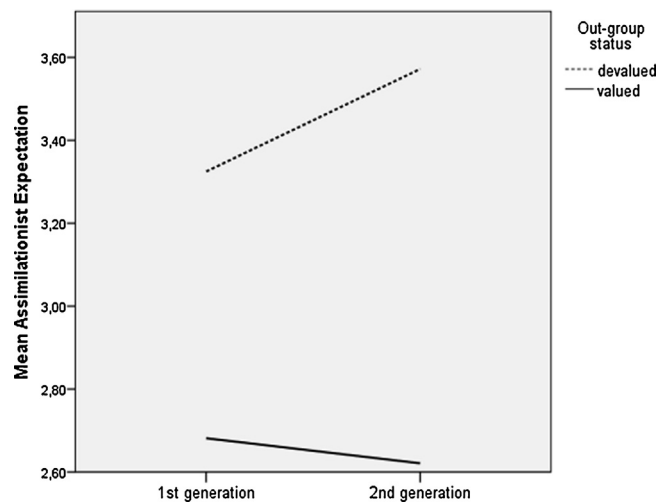


Fig. 4. Interaction of out-group and generational status in regard of assimilationist expectation.

#### 4. Discussion

Majority members' acculturation expectations seem to depend not only on whether the targeted group is societally valued or not, but also on their members' generational status. As our study suggests, acculturation expectations seem to be less welcoming towards the second generations than the first generations of immigrants. Regardless of out-group status, the participants in our study endorsed integration to lower degrees towards immigrants born in Germany, than they did towards those born abroad. Hence, while there seems to be some tolerance of biculturalism for those who "just arrived", the acceptance of cultural maintenance seems to be lower for their descendants.

Our study, however, also gives some evidence of out-group status interacting with the latter relations. Although the interaction term was only marginally significant, for valued immigrants, segregationism was significantly lower toward the second generation than toward the first generation. This indicates that majority members' may be *less* interested in culturally isolating the second generation of valued groups than they are towards the first generation. For devalued immigrant groups, however, segregationism was the same for both generations.

More than this, acculturation expectations that already are relatively unwelcoming towards devalued immigrant groups seem to be even more unwelcoming towards the second generation of these groups. As our results showed, assimilationist expectation was indeed higher towards the second generation of Turkish immigrants, while no such differences were observed for German-Poles. This finding is consistent with the study of Kunst and Sam (2013), where the second generation of Turks in Germany experienced higher assimilation expectations than the first generation of that group, indicating that immigrants' perceptions may quite accurately reflect real opinions held by the majority.

Interestingly, assimilationism was the only unwelcoming acculturation expectation that was higher for second generation German-Turks compared to the first generation. Studies have shown that European majority members perceive the culture of Muslim minorities, such as Turks, as threatening (e.g., González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008; Tip et al., 2012). Unfortunately, threat was not directly assessed in the present study. Yet, we speculate that a high degree of assimilationism toward the second generation of Turkish immigrants who obviously are likely to stay part of the German society was a way for our participants to mitigate this threatening culture. In contrast, they did not express higher degrees of segregation, possibly because this may have allowed for maintenance of the threatening culture. Last, increasing expectations such as exclusionism may have been politically too incorrect in a country with a history as Germany.

##### 4.1. Implications of the findings

One of the tenets of the interactive acculturation model is that when immigrants and host members' acculturation preferences diverge, intergroup relations in multicultural societies become conflictual (Bourhis et al., 1997; but see Komisarof, 2009). Research has shown that immigrants prefer acculturative styles that allow for cultural maintenance (see, e.g., Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006), and that this tendency is especially marked for the second generations of devalued immigrant groups (Kunst & Sam, 2013). As our study suggests, this preference among devalued minorities collides diametrically with majority members' apparent tendency to increase their expectation of cultural assimilation towards devalued second generation immigrants. It is like saying "if you were born here, and you are going to remain here, you should be like one of us", with very little room to maintain any of one's cultural heritage. A question this may raise is whether Germans perceive second generation devalued immigrants as more threatening, which also could be a reason why they are slow in granting them full German citizenship through naturalization.



Obviously, more studies are needed to explore whether our findings can be replicated in other societies. Also replications in German may yield different results, because the present study was limited as it used a non-representative online sample. In future studies it would also be of interest to compare acculturation expectations towards groups that differ more starkly in regard of their societal status. Although our results showed that Turks were significantly less valued than Poles, it may be equally appropriate to call the latter group a neutrally rather than valued minority group. Hence, results of future studies may be even more marked when these compare immigrant groups that differ more in terms of their societal status.

Moreover, we should optimally have measured majority members' perceived integration of first and second generation immigrants. For instance, it may be possible that more unwelcoming acculturation expectations toward second generation immigrants result out of disappointment about the respective group's perceived integration.

Last, in this study, we have differentiated generational status of immigrants as first vs. second generation. Where does the 1.5 generation – born abroad but growing up in their society of residence – fit in? In light of the immigration demographics of many European countries, this study is limited as it only compared expectations towards the first and second generation, where the second generation is much younger. Is it possible that the different pressure towards assimilation observed between the generations rather represent different attitudes toward “younger” compared to “older immigrants”? Future studies should further explore whether the out-group's duration of stay, or proportion of time spent in the society is the decisive factor in this regard. And, may intercultural contact further moderate the relations? Majority members may have more contact to immigrants that are born and therefore socialized into their society of residence than those who recently arrived. With several unanswered question stemming from this study, we are hesitant to come up with recommendations for intercultural relations but urge for further studies on this under-investigated topic.

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